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**TENNESSEE'S FINEST TRAVEL TO THE SMOKEY MOUNTAINS
FOR A WEEKEND OF TRAINING**

More than 700 of Tennessee finest firefighters will be traveling to Sevierville to attend a weekend of firefighter training.

The 2004 Smokey Mountain Firefighter Training Weekend, scheduled for March 6-7, is co-sponsored by The Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy, the Sevier County Fire Chiefs' Association and the Sevier County Training Association. Additional support is provided by the Sevierville Fire Department.

This 6th annual training event is offered to all firefighters across the state.

Students participate in a variety of educational training classes. Courses cover everything from the hands-on practical drills to emergency response to terrorism to incident command training. Basic courses include ladders, fire streams and self-contained breathing apparatus, while advanced courses include training for fire service leadership. These courses allow firefighters to gain knowledge for situations they face in their daily working environment.

Arson Detection for First Responders is an example of one of the more specialized courses. The class teaches the basics on how to determine the cause of a fire, and how to preserve and protect the fire scene. This knowledge allows for the preservation of evidence, which could be used for a court conviction.

Almost 70% of the states firefighters are volunteers who must work their daily jobs during the week. Holding the training on a weekend allows more volunteer firefighters to receive training that they desperately need but otherwise would not be able to obtain. These participants are then able to take their gained experience back to their co-workers in their communities.

These courses are offered to students at minimal cost. Students are responsible for course fees, transportation, and room and board. Many departments pay for the training, while others hold fundraisers to cover the fees associated with firefighter training.

"The Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy is proud to be a part of this unique educational training event," states Fire Service Program Director David Hedrick. "The

results of increased training is a fire service that is better prepared to fulfill its responsibility of protecting our citizens.”

Billed as the largest single training event in the state, firefighters from more than 130 fire departments will be in attendance.

The training weekend has grown in popularity, with the potential for additional courses and a larger venue being considered for the 2005 training weekend.

The training weekend will be held in Sevierville March 6-7, 2004.

Any media wishing to cover this event should contact Karen Alexander at 931.294.4111 or toll free at 800.747.8868.